

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
**SAFE HOME CHECKLIST**  
**for Families with Children Birth to 6 Years Old**



You can use this checklist to help you make your home a SAFE HOME for your child.

- Take the list and go through your home.
- For each question, circle Yes or No, depending on what you find in your home.
- If you circle Yes, that part of your home is safe for young children.
- If you circle No, you will need to make some changes to make your home safer.
- If you are renting, items with an asterisk \* are required of your landlord by the State Sanitary Code.

**KITCHEN SAFETY**



1. Are coffee, hot liquids and hot foods out of your child's reach? Yes No

- "Out of reach" means not in the hands of an adult holding a child.
- "Out of reach" means not at the edge of a counter or table.
- "Out of reach" means not on a tablecloth which could be pulled down.

- "Out of reach" will change as your child grows. Keep checking!

2. Are cleaning supplies stored out of your child's reach? Yes No

3. Are cleaning supplies stored separately from food? Yes No

4. Are food treats and other things your child might want stored away from the stove?

Yes No

5. Are vitamins and medicines kept out of your child's reach?

Yes No

6. Do you use extra care when cooking on the stove?

Yes No

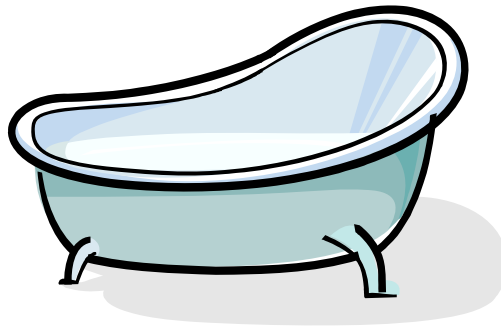
- "Extra care" means turning pot handles toward the back of the stove.

- "Extra care" means testing food heated in the microwave to make sure it's not too hot before you give it to your child.
- "Extra care" means keeping your child in a safe place while you cook.

7. Are knives and other sharp things kept out of your child's reach?

Yes No

## BATHROOM SAFETY



8. Are vitamins and medicines kept out of your child's reach?

Yes No

9. Are electrical appliances used outside of the bathroom or unplugged, away from water and beyond your child's reach?

Yes No

- Electrical appliances such as: radios, hair dryers, curling irons and space heaters are very dangerous and can cause death if they are plugged in and fall into a bathtub or sink with water.
- "Safe" means electrical appliances are out of the bathroom.

10. When your child is in the bathtub, are they watched ALL the time by an adult?

Yes No

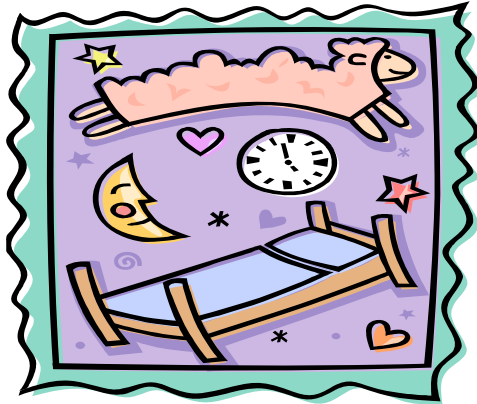
- Children can drown in just a few inches of water and in just a few seconds.
- Children can be burned by turning on the hot water themselves.

11\*. Is your hot water heater turned to a safe water temperature?

Yes No

- What temperature is your hot water heater set at? \_\_\_\_\_ degrees.
- We recommend a temperature of 120 degrees or less to prevent hot water burns.

## CHILD AREA SAFETY



12. Have you set up your furniture away from windows so that small children cannot climb up to the windows and fall out? Yes No

13\*. Do all windows have screens that are secure? Yes No

- Screens keep bugs out, but they do not keep kids in.

14. Have you put window guards in those windows that might be easier for your child to reach? Yes No

15. Are toddler gates used at the top and bottom of all stairs? Yes No

- Use hardware-mounted safety gates. Don't use an accordion type of gate. It can strangle your child and cause death.

16. Does the crib mattress fit tight in the crib?

Yes No

- A mattress that fits loosely in the crib can cause your child to get stuck and injured or suffocated.
- "Safe" = no more than 2 fingers distance between the mattress and crib frame.

17. Are the crib bars  $2 \frac{3}{8}$  inches or less apart? Yes No

- Your child could be caught or strangled between bars that have more than  $2 \frac{3}{8}$  inches of space between them.

18. If you have a toy chest, is it safe?

Yes No

- "Safe" = a VERY light weight lid or no lid at all on the toy chest.
- "Safe" = no way for child to get locked inside.

19. Is your furniture secured so that it will not tip over if your child climbs on it?

Yes No

- The furniture that can tip most easily onto your child includes:
  - book shelves or book cases
  - dressers or bureaus
  - desks
  - chests
  - TV stands
- Place TVs on low furniture, as far back as possible.

- Use angle-braces or anchor screws or

bolts to fasten furniture to the wall.

## GENERAL HOME SAFETY



20\*. Does your house or apartment have 2 exits with no obstructions in case of fire or other emergencies? Yes No

21. Are electrical cords out of your child's reach? Yes No

22. Are all electrical and extension cords in safe condition? Yes No

- "Safe" = not frayed.
- "Safe" = not overloaded.

23. Are indoor plants out of your child's reach? (Some are poisonous.) Yes No

24. Are all space heaters safe?

Yes No

- "Safe" = out of your child's reach.
- "Safe" = approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- "Safe" = stable on the floor.
- "Safe" = with protective grating or other covering.
- "Safe" = at least 3 feet away from curtains, papers and furniture.

25. If you have a wood burning stove, is it in safe condition and out of your child's reach?

Yes No

- "Safe" = has a yearly inspection of stove, stove pipe and chimney.
- "Safe" = has a protective screen around the stove.

26\*. Are stairs, railings, porches and balconies strong and in good condition?

Yes No

27\*. Is your house or apartment free of any loose or peeling paint?

Yes No

- Children can be poisoned by eating lead paint.

28. Is your basement secured so that your child can not get into it?

Yes No

- You should have a latch placed 5 feet or higher from the bottom of the door to the basement, out of your child's reach.

29. Is your garage secured so that your child can not get into it?

Yes No

- You should have a latch placed 5 feet or higher from the bottom of all doors to the garage, out of your child's reach.

30. If you have a pool, is it safe for children?

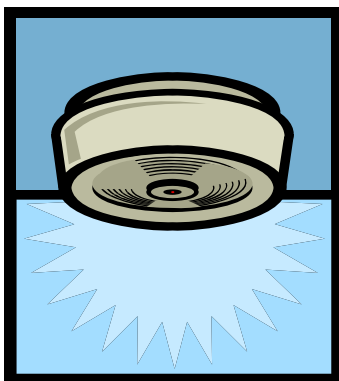
Yes No

- "Safe" = the pool is surrounded by a fence at least 4 feet high that cannot be climbed.
- "Safe" = pool fence has a latch that can't be opened by a child.

- “Safe” = pool drains have special covers to keep children from being sucked in and trapped.

- “Safe” = all adults in your house know child CPR and know how to dial 9-1-1 for help in an emergency.

## SAFETY SUPPLIES



31\*. Do you have safe, working smoke alarms?                      Yes    No

- “Safe” = alarms are installed on the ceiling
- “Safe” = alarms are installed one on every floor, in hallway outside sleeping areas and at bottom of all stairways, including the basement.
- “Safe” = alarms are tested monthly.
- “Safe” = batteries are replaced once a year, or when low (beeping).

32\*. Do you have working carbon monoxide detectors?                      Yes    No

- They should be placed near sleeping areas and in the basement

33. Do you have a Poison Control Center phone number sticker on your telephone?                      Yes    No

- You can get a sticker by calling the Poison Control Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.

34. Do you have safety latches on cabinets and drawers that your child can reach and that contain anything dangerous, like cleaning supplies, medicine, alcohol, knives, matches?

Yes    No

## SAFETY PRACTICES



35. Do you have a fire escape plan for your family? Have you practiced it?

Yes No

- Does your family have a meeting place outside?

36. Are matches and lighters kept out of your child's reach?

Yes No

37. If anyone in your home uses oxygen, do you make sure that no one smokes anywhere near them to prevent the very high risk of fire?

Yes No

38. If anyone in your home smokes, do they make sure NOT to smoke in bed?

Yes No

39. Has your child been tested for lead poisoning within the last 6 months?

Yes No

40. Does your child ride in a car safety seat or a booster seat in the back seat during all car travel?

Yes No

- The safest place for any child is in the backseat.
- For information on the proper seat for your child call

1-800-CAR SAFE (227-7328)

41. Do you use your seat belt during all car travel to protect yourself and to set a good example for your child?

Yes No

42. Does your child know how to “stop, drop, and roll” to put out flames if their clothes catch on fire?

Yes No

43. Do you always stay with your baby while they are on a high surface, like a changing table?

Yes No

44. Does your baby sleep safely?

Yes No

- “Sleep safely” = your baby is put to sleep on their back.
- “Sleep safely” = your baby sleeps in their own crib.
- “Sleep safely” = your baby does not share a bed with adults or with other children.
- “Sleep safely” = there are no pillows, comforters or soft toys in your baby's crib.

45. Do you keep small items and pieces of food that can choke your child out of their reach? Yes No

46. Are purses or bags with pills, cigarettes, matches, and small items that are easy to swallow and choke on kept out of your child's reach? Yes No

47. If you have a gun, is it safely out of reach? Yes No

- "Safely out of reach" = the gun is stored unloaded.
- "Safely out of reach" = the gun is locked and out of sight.
- "Safely out of reach" = ammunition is stored in a location that is locked and separate from the locked gun.

When you finish this SAFE HOME check list, you will have taken a BIG STEP toward making your home safer for your children, as well as for yourself!

List below any changes you need to make to have a safer home.

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Do you need safety supplies? Try your local hardware store or home improvement store.

Do you need information on how to get a home Sanitary Code inspection, or to have your child tested for lead? Call your local board of health or your town hall.

For more information on child safety and injury prevention, please call (617) 227-7328 (assistance available in other languages) TTY (617) 624-5992 or visit our website at: [www.state.ma.us/dph/fch/injury.index.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dph/fch/injury.index.htm)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Injury Prevention and Control Program  
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